MPHEC
Maritime Provinces
Higher Education
Commission

CESPM
Commission de
l'enseignement supérieur
des Provinces maritimes

POLICY ON QUALITY ASSURANCE

MAY 2005

The Council of Maritime Premiers

Le Conseil des premiers ministres des Maritimes

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Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission

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Table of Contents

CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION

1. Scope and purpose 1
2. Background 1
3. Overview 2
4. Value-added information for decision makers 3

CHAPTER II - PROGRAMME ASSESSMENT PRIOR TO IMPLEMENTATION

1. Purpose 5
2. Objective 5
3. Overview of the programme assessment process 5
4. Scope of the programme assessment process 6
5. Submission of proposals 8
6. Distribution of proposals 9
7. Assessment criteria 10
8. Approval through cursory review 12
9. In-depth assessment process 12
10. Conditions to approval 14
11. Policy framework 14
    - 11.1 Cooperative action 14
    - 11.2 Programme duplication 15
    - 11.3 Provincial policies 15
    - 11.4 Health and health-related programmes 16
12. Institutional compliance 17

Programme Assessment Appendices

- I Guidelines for the preparation of proposals for new programmes 19
- II Guidelines for the preparation of proposals to modify programmes 27
- III Guidelines for the preparation of proposals to terminate programmes 29
- IV Guidelines for the preparation of proposals for new articulated programmes 31
- V Generic Terms of Reference for External Reviewers (Graduate Programmes) 43
- VI AAU-MPHEC Academic Advisory Committee Terms of Reference 47

CHAPTER III - MONITORING INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

1. Objective 53
2. Focus 53
3. Scope 53
4. Cycle 54
5. A Quality Assurance Monitoring Committee 54
6. Process and outcomes 54
7. Review of the MPHEC monitoring process 56

Monitoring Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures Appendices

- I Guidelines for Institutional Quality Assurance Policies 57
- II Assessment Criteria for the MPHEC Monitoring Process 61
- III Guidelines for the Preparation of the Institutional Quality Assurance Report 65
- IV AAU-MPHEC Quality Assurance Monitoring Committee Terms of Reference 69

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1. Scope and purpose

The MPHEC policy on quality assurance is a reference tool to provide institutions on the Commission's schedule, Commission members and staff, and the AAU-MPHEC Academic Advisory Committee, as well as other stakeholders with a comprehensive description of the Commission's role in quality assurance. It does not cover the internal processes performed by staff to carry out this role. The policy document is intended to be a work in progress and is expected to be updated as modifications to the policy are made.

The Policy is divided into three chapters:

I Introduction to the Commission's Policy on Quality Assurance
II Programme assessment prior to implementation
III Monitoring of Institutional Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures

Chapter I introduces the policy including a description of the background, overall policy, and value-added information for decision makers.

Chapter II describes the purpose, objective, scope, key steps and outcomes of the Commission's programme assessment process. The appendices at the end of Chapter II include: the Guidelines for Preparation of New, Modified, Terminated and New Articulated programmes, Generic Terms of Reference for External Reviewers (graduate programmes), and the AAU-MPHEC Academic Advisory Committee Terms of Reference;.

Chapter III describes the objective, focus, scope, cycle, key steps and outcomes of the Commission's process for the monitoring of institutional policies and procedures. The appendices at the end of Chapter III include: the Guidelines for Institutional Quality Assurance Policies, Assessment Criteria for the MPHEC Monitoring Process, the Guidelines for the Preparation of the Institutional Quality Assurance Report and the AAU-MPHEC Quality Assurance Monitoring Committee Terms of Reference.

2. Background

When the Commission was established in 1974, its initial mandate was to "assist the Provinces and the institutions in attaining a more efficient and effective utilization and allocation of resources in the field of higher education in the region," making the Commission a key player in determining funding to institutions on its schedule. In addition, the Commission, at that time, only reviewed programme proposals for funding purposes.

In the 1990s, however, following a period of fiscal constraints, the Ministers of Education in the three Maritime provinces, after a review of the Commission's mandate, agreed to resume control of funding. Subsequently, the Commission's mandate changed from that of "rational use of resources", to that of "providing advice and assistance to institutions and government"; and in 1997, "An Agreement Respecting the Renewal of Arrangements for Regional Cooperation Concerning Post-secondary Education" was signed by the three Maritime premiers. In January 2005, the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission Act, reflecting the Agreement, was proclaimed.

Through the Legislation, the primary orientation of the Commission was re-directed toward "improving and maintaining the best possible service to students as life-long learners", primarily within the university sector. This is to be achieved through the following duties: quality assurance, data and information, cooperative action and regional programmes.

Since its inception, the Commission has played a key role in ensuring that Maritimers have access to a broad range of quality programmes by approving new programmes for funding purposes, reviewing modified programmes, designating regional programmes, buying seats outside of the region for Maritime students, etc. However, in the context of the renewed mandate, which no longer tied the Commission's role in quality assurance directly to funding, the Commission, following a Conference on Quality Assurance in May 1996, and after several months of discussion, released in January 1997 a discussion paper entitled "Options for Quality Assurance in Higher Education in the Maritimes". This was followed by a series of public fora in the three Maritime provincial capitals to discuss the options in the area of quality assurance. This led to the publication of an interim report, "Commission Consideration of Quality Assurance Options", in July 1997.

In November 1997, the Commission adopted its Policy on Quality Assurance and in November 1998, the Commission approved revisions to its Guidelines for the preparation of programme proposals and the Terms of Reference for the joint AAU-MPHEC Academic Advisory Committee, a standing committee of the Commission. The Policy was officially released in February 1999.

In 2004-2005, the Commission undertook another consultation process with its stakeholders to seek input on the implementation of the programme approval process which resulted in the current update of the Commission's Policy on Quality Assurance.

3. Overview

The Commission's Policy on Quality Assurance provides decision-makers both with accountability measures pertaining to the institutions on the Commission's schedule and with value-added information to assist in policy decisions related to the post-secondary sector. The Commission's policy, which defines the Commission's role in quality assurance, is based on two major considerations. First, the policy recognizes that

institutions are autonomous and responsible to their boards for designing and implementing quality programmes for their clients. Second, the policy recognizes that stakeholders (government, students, taxpayers, etc.) have a legitimate need for assurances about the quality and cost-effectiveness of institutional programmes and services that they use and for which they help pay. To balance these two perspectives, the Commission designed its policy to bring together two major instruments:

- an assessment of academic programmes prior to implementation; and
- a new process to monitor institutional quality assurance policies and procedures.

When combined, both instruments ensure a continuum of quality: the programme assessment process provides assurances to government, students, employers and the public at large that programmes designed by publicly funded institutions in the Maritimes meet established standards of quality prior to implementation; and the monitoring process provides assurances that Maritime institutions have effective quality assurance policies and procedures in place to ensure that programmes, once implemented, are reviewed internally and externally to provide continuous quality improvements. In addition, an institution's quality assurance policy is expected to cover not only academic programmes but also all services and functions designed to augment the "university" experience.

4. Value-added information for decision makers

The Commission's Quality Assurance Policy feeds into all key areas of intervention of the Commission as identified in the 2005 Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission Act (quality assurance, data and information, stimulating cooperative action, administration of regional programmes, and services to provinces and institutions).

As part of its quality assurance activities, the Commission collects and stores large amounts of information that supports decision makers in matters relating to the Maritime post-secondary sector. Programmes assessed through the Commission are assigned a programme code which allows the Commission to track (and audit) enrolments, programme development and programme duplication, to identify enrolments in regional programmes to be included under the Regional Transfer Arrangement and to provide weighted full-time equivalent values for the application of the New Brunswick funding formula.

Other accountability measures supported by the Commission's Quality Assurance Policy include:

- ensuring the widest possible array of programmes while respecting fiscal realities;
- providing a regional context for programmes to ensure that unwarranted duplication is avoided in order to optimize the use of limited resources in the region;
- assuring that programmes are of optimum length;
- promoting collaboration among institutions in the development, delivery, and administration of programmes;

- ensuring that students, governments and taxpayers, all making large investments in education, are served by programmes of assured quality;
- requiring universities to identify and articulate measurable goals;
- ensuring, through the distribution process, that programme proposals benefit from a review by a wide range of stakeholders (students, government, public at large, and university representatives);
- requiring universities to provide evidence that they have policies in place to ensure continuous quality improvements; and
- requiring universities to provide evidence that their policies cover not only academic programmes but student and administrative services as well.

CHAPTER II

PROGRAMME ASSESSMENT PRIOR TO IMPLEMENTATION

1. Purpose

The purpose of the programme assessment process is to:

- improve, as required, the quality of academic programmes; and
- provide assurances that programmes meet pre-determined standards of quality.

2. Objective

The overall objective of the programme assessment is to ascertain the suitability of the programme given its objectives, structure, institutional appropriateness, resources, stated student outcomes and their relevance in the context of the Commission's policy framework through an iterative process.

The main outcome of the assessment is programme approval. As such, the Commission's process is also described as a programme approval process.

3. Overview of the programme assessment process

Key steps of the programme assessment process are as follows:

- Institution drafts a programme proposal using MPHEC guidelines.
- After internal approvals, institutional head submits the proposal to the Commission.
- Proposal is distributed to the system for comment.
- Comments received from the system are forwarded to the submitting institution for a response.
- Staff assess the proposal using established criteria:
  - ➥ Programme is approved through cursory review provided it meets pre-determined criteria; or
  - ➥ Is submitted to AAU-MPHEC Academic Advisory Committee for an in-depth assessment.
    - ✓ The Committee's advice is forwarded to the Commission for final decision.
- If approved, new programmes are assigned a programme code, and in the case of modified or terminated programme proposals, the programme code is verified.
- Institutions that raised concerns during the distribution process are informed of the outcome of the assessment.

4. Scope of the programme assessment process

All institutions on the Commission's schedule are required to submit to the Commission a proposal prior to implementation for all:

- new programmes;
- modified programmes; and
- programme terminations.

This includes all new, modified and terminated programmes not already accounted for by the Commission under the existing academic programme and credential structures at the submitting institution, and meeting any of the following criteria:

- leading to an exit credential;
- that are the equivalent of 30 credits or one full year of study at the undergraduate level (regardless of whether it leads to an exit credential); or
- that are a type to be tracked as per Commission decision (which may change from time to time).

New programmes

A new programme includes any programme not currently offered or accounted for under the existing (MPHEC approved) academic programme and credential structures at the submitting institution.

When submitting a proposal for a new programme, institutions are asked to prepare their proposal using the *Guidelines for the preparation of proposals for new programmes* (Appendix I).

In recognition of the unique features of articulated programmes, the Commission has devised separate *Guidelines for the preparation of proposals for new articulated programmes* (Appendix IV). When submitting a proposal for a **new** programme articulated between two or more institutions, where at least one institution is on the Commission schedule, institutions are asked to prepare the proposal using these guidelines (Appendix IV). These guidelines have two objectives: programme quality and suitability of services for the students involved. In addition, these guidelines do not attempt to define the articulation arrangements between institutions, given the myriad of possible solutions.

An articulated programme is defined, for the purpose of this policy, as a substantively new programme articulating components of a post-secondary programme delivered by one institution with components of the programme delivered by another. The general aim of such programmes is to expand the opportunities for graduates to acquire both occupation-specific and general post-secondary education competencies. The objectives of articulated programmes, from a public policy point of view, are to provide graduates with a more timely

access to significant jobs or earnings and ensure that they have indeed acquired both occupation-specific and general post-secondary education competencies.

These institutions generally grant two different types (levels) of credentials. The institutions will generally be a community college and a university. However, other education providers (publicly or privately funded) could also be involved. An articulated programme can have one or more exit points at varying levels:

- When there is only one level, the programme is delivered by two institutions but its completion leads to only one credential.
- When there are two (or more) levels, the programme is delivered by two (or more) institutions and its completion normally leads to two recognized credentials, generally at two different levels. One credential may be earned as a requirement to earn the other, or they may be earned concurrently or independently.

An articulated programme is not limited to credit transfers, although it will likely include the provision of credit transfer agreements between institutions. An articulated programme is more than the simple juxtaposition or addition of existing programmes. Articulated programmes may lead to credentials in applied arts, applied sciences, applied social sciences, technology, etc. or they could lead to more traditional designations (Arts, Science, etc.).

Modified programmes

A programme is considered modified when the programme name and/or credential do not change but 25 percent of the existing academic programme content has been modified including revisions that have a significant effect on one or several of the following:

- the programme structure, e.g. duration, entrance requirements, focus, faculty/department;
- the concentration type, e.g. minor, major, honours, joint majors, specializations, concentrations; if the institution already grants a credential of a higher level in the same area at the undergraduate level, Commission approval is not warranted;
- the programme form, e.g. integrated, sequential, change to co-op (mandatory or optional), interdisciplinary;
- the target clientele;
- the programme priority, e.g. continuation of a term/pilot programme; or
- the costs.

When submitting a proposal to modify a programme, institutions are asked to prepare their proposal using the *Guidelines for the preparation of proposals to modify programmes* (Appendix II). In the case of modifications to existing articulated programmes, the proposal must also be submitted to the Commission using the *Guidelines for the preparation of proposals to modify programmes* (Appendix II).

Terminated programmes

A programme is considered terminated when the submitting institution intends to no longer admit students into a programme and to permanently remove the programme from its offerings and the corresponding programme code for enrollment reporting purposes.

When submitting a proposal to terminate a programme, institutions are asked to prepare their proposal using the *Guidelines for the preparation of proposals to terminate programmes* (Appendix III). In the case of terminations of existing articulated programmes, the proposal must also be submitted using the *Guidelines for the preparation of proposals to terminate programmes* (Appendix III).

Other programme proposals

In addition, to facilitate decision-making, the following criteria further define the Commission's requirements for entry into the programme assessment process:

- Proposals for a reciprocal agreement are subject to review only if the criteria for entry into the programme assessment process are met.
- Proposals for a double major, where one is an already approved major and the second is not a stand-alone major, are assessed, providing the criteria outlined above are met.
- Proposals for a name change or new credential must be submitted either as a modified or a new programme, depending on the type of changes occurring within the programme.
- Proposals for full-cost recovery programmes, providing the criteria outlined above are met.
- Any revisions to inter-institutional agreements are only assessed if the agreements do not cover already approved programmes.
- Proposals for stand-alone minors equivalent to less than 30 credits, and do not provide an exit credential, are not assessed.
- Proposals incorporating a block credit transfer into an already approved programme and credential, with no changes to the programme are not subject to further review.

Programmes not meeting the criteria as outlined above are received as information, and are not tracked. Programmes received as information will be distributed as such, but are not further analysed by staff, nor brought before the Commission.

5. Submission of proposals

Institutions are asked to submit proposals (under the signature of their President) once their appropriate governing bodies have approved the new, modified, or terminated programme proposals. All proposals must be submitted using the appropriate Guidelines (see

Appendices I to IV) and must address all the assessment criteria as noted within the Guidelines and in section 7. The Commission acknowledges that not all the information requested will be available for each and every proposal. The absence of information must however be noted and explained.

Proposals must be submitted on paper **and** on a diskette or electronically, via e-mail (mphec@mphec.ca). At a minimum, the proposal itself must be submitted electronically; at this time, the Commission does not require that all appendices be submitted electronically.

The Commission appreciates that the information required by its guidelines may rely on proprietary information. In such circumstances, the institution should attach the information as an appendix and identify it as proprietary information. Proprietary information is not circulated during the distribution of proposals. In most instances, proprietary information is only used by staff. In some cases, it may be distributed to the Academic Advisory Committee and to the Commission; it may also be circulated to consultants hired by the Commission to assess the proposed programme. In every case, the information is always identified as confidential when it is distributed. These are the only instances in which proprietary information, as identified by the submitting institution, is distributed.

6. Distribution of proposals

Upon receipt, programme proposals, not including appendices, are distributed electronically to the AAU-MPHEC Academic Advisory Committee members, Commission members and institutions on the Commission's schedule, for comment and to facilitate communication between institutions on recent programme developments in the region. Specifically, stakeholders have 10 working days from the date of distribution to forward any comments to the Commission's office. Stakeholders can request, by email (mphec@mphec.ca), an extension of five working days to forward their comments, provided that it informs the Commission within 10 working days from the date of distribution. With the exception of comments from the AAU-MPHEC Academic Advisory Committee members and Commission members, comments from all other stakeholders must represent an institutional/government/organizational point of view and are to be sent under the signature of the institutional or government department head or designate.

All comments received through the distribution process are forwarded to the submitting institution who must provide a response to any concerns. The assessment process is suspended pending a response from the submitting institution.

Any institution who raises significant concerns about a particular programme proposal during the distribution process will be informed of the final outcome of the assessment.

7. Assessment criteria

Every proposal, drafted according to the appropriate Guidelines for the preparation of a programme proposal (Appendices I to IV), must include:

1. Clearly defined **programme objectives and structure**, including references to optimum programme length, as well as a demonstration that the programme name and credential granted adequately capture the programme content ("truth in advertising").

2. Clearly defined **anticipated student outcomes** at the programme level and a demonstration of their relevance, including (1) learning outcomes, (2) graduate outcomes, and (3) other outcomes, as deemed appropriate/relevant in the context of a particular programme.

3. Evidence of the **adequacy of resources** (human, physical and financial) and references to the various sources of funding.

4. Evidence of the **involvement of peers and experts**, normally external to the institution in the development of the proposed programme. Each external expert should be identified and their written assessment or comments on the proposed programme should be included.

5. Evidence of an **environmental scan** to identify similar or equivalent or comparable programmes in the region and elsewhere as appropriate.

6. Evidence of **consultation** with institutions offering similar or equivalent or comparable programmes (at a minimum, letters or evidence of communication sent to other institutions requesting input; preferably, written comments from these institutions should be included). When conflicting views about the programme emerge from the distribution process, the Chair of the Academic Advisory Committee and/or the Chair of the Commission will be consulted. (This does not imply that an in-depth review of the programme will take place.)

7. Evidence of **need**, as documented by, among other things, analysis of the evolution of the discipline: labour market analysis; demand for graduates; consultation with potential employers and professional organization(s). This evidence should rely on external sources such as leading scholars, government agencies, employers, professional organizations, etc.

8. Evidence of **student demand**.

9. Proposals for **new graduate programmes** are assessed through all previously listed assessment criteria as well as the following criteria:
   a. Existence of an academic environment that supports scholarship such as original research, creativity and the advancement of professional knowledge, as relevant to the proposed programme. Academic environment is characterized, in the context of programme assessment at the graduate level, as follows:
      - a critical mass of research-active faculty and of graduate students;
      - sufficient breadth of disciplinary expertise among faculty;
      - an appropriate support network of related programmes (normally undergraduate and, where relevant, graduate);
      - capacity to provide a choice of advanced-level graduate courses;
      - evidence of sufficient library resources (as evidenced by holdings ratio among other measures) and access to scholarly communications for a graduate-level programme;
      - an appropriate structure (such as an Office of Graduate Studies) to support the programme, especially in the case of a doctoral programme; and
      - in the case of research-based (master's and doctoral) degree programmes, an appropriate academic environment is further characterized by
        - ➥ a strong research focus within the unit proposing the programme (as evidenced by peer reviewed grants and publications, as well as seminars, research colloquia etc.);
        - ➥ evidence of faculty's ability to provide long-term supervisory capacity and supervisory committee membership; and
        - ➥ a demonstration that an appropriate level of student financial support is available.
   b. The final version of the programme proposal has been reviewed by an expert external to the institution, prior to submission to the Commission.[1]
   c. The proposed programme is non-duplicative of offerings elsewhere in the region or represents necessary duplication, or market demand demonstrably justifies further capacity.
   d. The nature of the proposed programme is such that it can best be offered at the institution in question.
   e. Employability, and student demand for such a programme favour the implementation of the proposed programme.

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[1]The selected expert(s), recognized scholars in the field of the proposal, are expected to be selected according to established standards (are recognized scholars in the field of the proposal, have not studied at, collaborated with or worked for the submitting institution within the past seven years, and are not in any potential conflict of interest among other standards) and their Terms of Reference are expected to cover at a minimum the elements highlighted in Appendix V, Generic Terms of Reference for External Reviewers.

The Guidelines, found in Appendices I-IV, further define the information requirements under each assessment criterion noted above. The Commission acknowledges that not all the information requested will be available for each and every proposal. The absence of information must however be noted and explained.

8. Approval through cursory review

Every programme proposal undergoes a cursory review, defined as staff's assessment of the proposal against pre-determined assessment criteria (see Section 7). If the proposal is not approved through cursory review, it is assessed in-depth, that is, it is referred to the AAU-MPHEC Academic Advisory Committee, who then advises the Commission. This process is described in detail below.

Proposals for new, modified and terminated programmes that meet the pre-determined assessment criteria and where no major issue arises during the distribution process and staff assessment are granted approval through cursory review. Staff may request additional information from the submitting institution, to avoid triggering an in-depth assessment, in cases where the required clarifications can easily be sought from the submitting institution.

Once a programme proposal is approved through cursory review, it is entered in the appropriate data bases and the Chief Executive Officer of the Commission notifies the institution that the programme has been approved.

Neither the Academic Advisory Committee nor the Commission review programme proposals approved through cursory review other than through the initial distribution process mentioned above. In order to keep both the Committee and the Commission informed of these approvals, staff prepares a report of programme proposals received and approved through cursory review. This report is included on the agenda, for information, when either the Committee or the Commission meets. In addition, all programme proposals considered in a given year are included in the MPHEC annual report.

Normally, the timeframe for approval through cursory review averages five to six weeks. The timeframe is extended during the Christmas and summer holidays; specifically the review process is suspended between December 1 and January 5 and June 20 and August 5. As noted above, the timeframe may be delayed pending a response from the submitting institution to requests for clarification or comments raised through the distribution process.

9. In-depth assessment process

Programme proposals that cannot be approved through a cursory review are assessed in-depth, that is, they are referred by staff to the AAU-MPHEC Academic Advisory Committee.

It should be noted that any programme proposal which includes a request for new additional funding from public sources automatically undergoes an in-depth assessment.

The AAU-MPHEC Academic Advisory Committee (AAC) is responsible for the in-depth assessment process. The Committee determines the academic merit of proposals not approved through the cursory review process and advises the Commission. The Committee's Terms of Reference can be found in Appendix VI.

The process for an in-depth assessment is as follows:

- Staff prepares an analysis of the proposal and identifies any issue which arises (during the cursory review stage).
- The AAC reviews the proposal and any comments received from other institutions, other stakeholder groups.
- The AAC may request additional information and/or the advice of experts in the field if deemed appropriate, the Committee may choose either an external consultant(s)[2] or reader(s)[3] depending on the type of information it is seeking.
- The Committee may elect to forward suggestions or recommendations to the institution to resolve the issues.
- The Committee may elect to meet with representatives of the submitting institution for further clarification and/or exchange of information during the in-depth assessment process.
- Once the issues are resolved, or when the Committee has concluded that resolution is not possible, the Committee then forwards its final advice to the Commission.

An in-depth assessment is normally conducted in three to six months. Proposals undergoing an in-depth review which contain evidence that a peer review process was included in the development stages of the proposed programme are normally assessed in a shorter time frame. Proposals for new graduate level programmes must have been reviewed by an expert external to the institution prior to submission to the Commission.

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[2]An external consultant is required to carry out a site visit as part of the assessment process and is paid an honorarium, reimbursed travel and incidental expenses. The consultant is an agent of the Commission and not the participating institution. Normally one consultant is hired per programme. However, when appropriate, the Committee will hire up to two or three, for example, if a programme consists of more than one foci or is multi-disciplinary in nature.

[3] External readers are not asked to do a site visit and are not paid an honorarium. These are persons knowledgeable in their field who participate in this process as a contribution toward their particular field of study. External readers are normally engaged when the Committee is unfamiliar with the proposed programme's focus or area, and therefore wishes to gather foundational knowledge, or in some instances, when a new programme structure or pattern is introduced to the Maritime university system.

10. Conditions to approval

All programmes, whether approved through an in-depth assessment or a cursory review, are expected to undergo an external review after one or two cohorts have graduated, normally by year five of operation to be undertaken by the submitting institution. The Commission reserves the right to seek, from time to time, evidence that an external review has occurred.

In addition, any approval, whether through an in-depth assessment or a cursory review, is valid for two years from the date of approval, i.e. changes to a programme or a new programme must be implemented within two years of approval or the approval becomes null and void. A re-submission of an updated programme proposal is required should the institution still want to implement the programme.

11. Policy framework

While academic quality is the primary driver of the Commission's programme approval process, the process must take into account a number of policies and these can impact the programme approval process. The Commission's current policy framework includes the following:

- Cooperative action
- Programme duplication
- Provincial policies
- Health and health-related programmes

11.1 Cooperative action

The *Agreement Respecting the Renewal of Arrangements for Regional Cooperation Concerning Post-secondary Education*, signed in June 1997 by the three Ministers responsible for higher education in the Maritimes, states that "the Commission is expected to take initiatives to stimulate cooperative action among institutions and governments where such action is likely to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Maritimes' post-secondary education system. This may include encouraging initiatives for institutions to offer joint, complementary and regional programmes."

In keeping with this mandate, the Commission expects that institutions will seek to collaborate with other post-secondary institutions, both university and non-university, in the delivery of programmes where such collaboration could be beneficial in this regard.

11.2 Programme duplication

The Commission places great emphasis on the need to optimize the use of limited resources in the region. The Commission addresses issues associated with programme duplication through the following variables, in no particular order:

- Geographical and linguistic accessibility for students.
- Existence of similar programmes either in the Maritimes or elsewhere in Canada.
- If a similar programme is already available, the differences in programme emphasis.
- Institutional differences, uniqueness and capacity; impact on the financial viability of the submitting institution.
- Institutional programme niches and leadership in programme areas within the Maritimes.
- Range of programmes required for any institution wishing to call itself a university.
- Overlap of programmes and programme areas between the community college and university systems.
- Needs and demand of learners for a seamless post-secondary system, and for an improved transition between learning and the workforce (transferability of credit, credit equivalency, articulated programmes, reciprocal agreements, recognition and portability of credentials, emphasis on educational requirements of employers and industry need, and links between education and preparation for employment).
- The development, maintenance, integrity and support of a Maritime post-secondary system, including any provincial or regional role and capacity exercise.
- Determination of programme need and impact within the context of the existing environment, both internal and external. The external environment includes examining the possibility of collaboration with other institutions.

The Commission needs to know whether or not similar programmes are already available either in the Maritimes or elsewhere in Canada and, if so, how the proposed programme differs from or relates to existing programmes. Whether a proposed programme is unique within the region or Canada, or similar to an existing one, the need for its introduction should be substantiated.

11.3 Provincial policies

In its review of programme proposals, the Commission must consider any provincial policies that impact programme delivery/offerings, such as the rationalization of education programmes in Nova Scotia, which dictates which universities in Nova Scotia can offer education programmes as well as the degree structure for education programmes. For example, University X in Nova Scotia may submit a programme proposal for an education programme that meets all the pre-determined standards of academic quality, however, the Commission cannot approve the programme on the basis that University X is not allowed to offer the programme according to Nova Scotia's provincial policies. Other regional

frameworks for specific areas exist such as in Engineering and in Kinesiology, Health Education, Recreation/Leisure Studies and Related Areas.

11.4 Health and health-related programmes

Prior to submission to the MPHEC, all new and modified health and health-related programme proposals are to be assessed by the Atlantic Advisory Committee on Health Human Resources (AACHHR) which determines the need for the programme. Based on this assessment, AACHHR makes a recommendation about the proposed programme to the Atlantic Deputy Ministers responsible for Post-Secondary Education and for Health. Atlantic Deputies in turn consider the recommendation of the AACHHR and make a final determination on the need for a proposed program. Their determination is forwarded to the MPHEC and the institution involved. Submissions of health and health-related programme proposals to the MPHEC must be accompanied by a letter from the AACHHR on behalf of the Atlantic Deputy Ministers responsible for Post-Secondary Education and for Health indicating their support of the proposed programme. Once submitted to the MPHEC, health and health-related programme proposals, as with all other programme proposal types, are reviewed to determine their academic merit. MPHEC will not consider any health and health-related programme proposals that are not supported by Atlantic Deputy Ministers of Health and Post-Secondary Education.

The objective of the AACHHR review process is to provide institutions with feedback on the need for proposed health and health-related programmes and initiate necessary discussions among the institutions and the Departments of Health and of Education prior to the development of a full proposal for submission to the MPHEC. As such, the AACHHR expects to review proposals for health and health-related programmes in the early development stages of the programme proposal.

In an effort to promote the education and training of employable health professionals, the AACHHR requires that institutions submit for approval all health and health-related programme proposals to which one or more of the following attributes apply:

1. The programme is aimed at training health practitioners.
2. Provincial governments will become defacto employers of a significant portion of programme graduates.
3. The delivery or management of health-related programmes may be influenced by the availability of these graduates.
4. The proposed health or health-related education or training programme is provided with provincial government support.

For more information about the AACHHR's process, its scope and information requirements, please contact the Secretariat of the Council of Atlantic Premiers, Health Human Resources Sector by mail at P.O. Box 2044, 5161 George Street, Suite 1006, Halifax, NS B3J 2Z1, by telephone at (902) 424-7590 or by e-mailing info@cap-cpma.ca.

Please note that once a proposal is ready for submission to the Commission, it must be drafted using the Commission's guidelines for either new, modified, terminated and new articulated programme proposals as found under Appendices I-IV.

12. Institutional compliance

As noted earlier, when the Commission was initially established, programmes were only approved for funding purposes, i.e. only enrolments for programmes approved by the Commission could be included in the funding formula for institutions across the region. Since 1997, however, the provinces resumed control of funding and the Commission's role in quality assurance evolved to one of providing advice and guidance to institutions. Through the "Agreement Respecting the Renewal of Arrangements for Regional Cooperation Concerning Post-secondary Education", the three Ministers of Education have stated that they expect the institutions on the Commission's schedule to comply with the MPHEC's requirements in the areas of quality assurance. In addition, students enrolled in programmes not approved by the Commission are not eligible for student aid in Nova Scotia; while, in New Brunswick, the funding formula continues to include a component linked to enrolments in approved programmes.

GUIDELINES FOR THE PREPARATION OF PROPOSALS
FOR NEW PROGRAMMES

GUIDELINES FOR THE PREPARATION OF PROPOSALS
TO MODIFY PROGRAMMES

GUIDELINES FOR THE PREPARATION OF PROPOSALS
TO TERMINATE PROGRAMMES

GUIDELINES FOR THE PREPARATION OF PROPOSALS
FOR NEW ARTICULATED PROGRAMMES

GENERIC TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR
EXTERNAL REVIEWERS (GRADUATE PROGRAMMES)

AAU-MPHEC ACADEMIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TERMS OF REFERENCE

APPENDIX I
GUIDELINES FOR THE PREPARATION OF PROPOSALS FOR NEW PROGRAMMES

The Commission acknowledges that not all the information requested will be available for each and every proposal. The absence of information must, however, be noted and explained. The key is to address the assessment criteria listed below and further defined on pages 10 and 11 of the Policy. The definition of a new programme may be found on pages 6 and 7 of the Policy.

1. PROGRAMME IDENTIFICATION

1.1 Submitting institution(s)
1.2 Faculty
1.3 School
1.4 Department
1.5 Programme name and level
1.6 Credential(s) granted
1.7 Proposed starting date

2. PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION

This section of the proposal must provide the information necessary to meet the following assessment criterion: "clearly defined programme objectives and structure, to include references to optimum programme length, as well as a demonstration that the programme name and credential granted adequately capture the programme content ("truth in advertising")."

2.1 Description of programme objectives.
2.2 Description of the overall programme structure.
2.3 Admission requirements, standards, etc.
2.4 Listing of the courses required (course name and number, whether existent or planned, its status in the programme, i.e., compulsory vs. optional; brief description of the course (for example, calendar entry). Programme duration should be stated, as well as justified.
2.5 Other special requirements such as thesis, practicum, apprenticeship, etc.
2.6 Method of programme delivery (e.g. traditional classroom, distance education, co-operative education or a combination).
2.7 In the case of a graduate programme, an indication of whether a programme is a research-based programme or professional programme, thesis-based or course-based.

3. Student Outcomes and their Relevance

This section of the proposal must provide the information necessary to meet the following assessment criterion: "clearly defined anticipated student outcomes at the programme level and a demonstration of their relevance, including (1) learning outcomes, (2) graduate outcomes, and (3) other outcomes, as deemed appropriate/relevant in the context of a particular programme."

3.1 Identification of learning outcomes and their relevance to the proposed programme, such as critical thinking skills, breadth and depth of knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, analytical/problem-solving skills, occupation/licencing/accreditation requirements, communication skills, writing skills, etc.

3.2 Identification of graduates' outcomes and their relevance to the proposed programme, such as further education or graduate study, employability, licensing, accreditation, etc.

3.3 Identification of other outcomes and their relevance to the proposed programme, such as team building, leadership, social citizenship, etc.

4. Resource Implications

This section of the proposal must provide the information necessary to meet the following assessment criterion: "evidence of the adequacy of resources (human, physical and financial) and references to the various sources of funding."

Considering the first five years (or the time frame in which the programme is expected to be fully operational) of the proposed programme:

4.1. Human and Physical Resource Implications

- 4.1.1 Description of the extent to which current resources in terms of academic and support staff, library, space, equipment, etc. would be used.
- 4.1.2 Additional resources needed in the same areas.
- 4.1.3 Impact of the use of these resources on other programmes, including the elimination or the reduction of the scope of programmes to accommodate the new programme.
- 4.1.4 Estimate of resource needs and allocation beyond the first five years.

4.2 Financial Implications

4.2.1 Full and incremental costs of the programme for the first five years (or the time frame in which the programme is expected to be fully operational), broken down by major cost areas, academic salaries, other salaries, equipment, library acquisitions, space, etc.

4.2.2 Expected sources of revenue to cover the costs.

4.2.3 Expectations in terms of additional capital or operating funding. (Institutions are normally expected to find the financial resources for new programmes from increases in the regular budget, through reallocation, or from other sources).

5. Relationship to Other Programmes and Institutions

This section of the proposal must provide the information necessary to meet the following assessment criteria: "evidence of an environmental scan to identify similar or equivalent or comparable programmes in the region and elsewhere as appropriate" and "evidence of consultation with institutions offering similar or equivalent or comparable programmes."

5.1 Relationship and impact on existing programmes in the same institution.

5.2 Comparison of the proposed programme with other comparable programmes offered elsewhere in the Maritimes and in Canada and rationale for the introduction of an additional programme, if a similar one is already offered in the region.

5.3 Possibilities of collaboration with other institutions in the region (university or non-university), or elsewhere in Canada, in the delivery of the programme and steps taken to that effect.

5.4 Evidence of consultation with institutions offering similar or equivalent or comparable programmes (at a minimum, details on the consultation process and letters or evidence of communication sent to other institutions requesting input; preferably, letters of comments from these institutions should be included).

6. PROGRAMME NEED

This section of the proposal must provide the information necessary to meet the following assessment criteria: "evidence of need" and "evidence of student demand."

6.1 The social (local, regional, national) need(s) met by graduates from such programmes as documented by, among other things, analysis of the evolution of the discipline, labour market analysis, demand for graduates, etc. This evidence should rely on external sources (leading scholars, government agencies, employers, professional organizations, etc.).

6.2 Consultation with employers and/or professional organizations as to the current and anticipated job market; employability data.

6.3 Priority within each institution's programme structure and development.

6.4 Student demand.

6.5 Clientele (expected enrolment, enrolment limits or expected maximum enrolment, and clientele sources).

7. PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

This section of the proposal must provide the information necessary to meet the following assessment criterion: "evidence of the involvement of peers and experts, normally external to the institution in the development of the proposed programme."

7.1 Description of the institutional programme development process leading to the submission of the proposal. Each internal and external expert should be identified and their written assessment or comments on the proposed programme appended to the proposal.

7.2 Description of response to external reviews.

7.3 Description of any accreditation requirements.

8. Additional Assessment Criteria and Information Requirements in the Case of a Proposal for a New Graduate Programme

In addition to addressing all the information requirements identified within Sections 1 through 7 of these Guidelines, a proposal for a graduate-level programme must meet the following information requirements and assessment criteria.

Proposals for new graduate programmes are assessed through all previously listed assessment criteria as well as the following criteria:

a. Existence of an academic environment that supports scholarship such as original research, creativity and the advancement of professional knowledge, as relevant to the proposed programme. Academic environment is characterized, in the context of programme assessment at the graduate level, as follows:
   - a critical mass of research-active faculty and of graduate students;
   - sufficient breadth of disciplinary expertise among faculty;
   - an appropriate support network of related programmes (normally undergraduate and, where relevant, graduate);
   - capacity to provide a choice of advanced-level graduate courses;
   - evidence of sufficient library resources (as evidenced by holdings ratio among other measures) and access to scholarly communications for a graduate-level programme;
   - an appropriate structure (such as an Office of Graduate Studies) to support the programme, especially in the case of a doctoral programme; and
   - in the case of research-based (master's and doctoral) degree programmes, an appropriate academic environment is further characterized by
     - ➥ a strong research focus within the unit proposing the programme (as evidenced by peer reviewed grants and publications, as well as seminars, research colloquia, etc.);
     - ➥ evidence of faculty's ability to provide long-term supervisory capacity and supervisory committee membership; and
     - ➥ a demonstration that an appropriate level of student financial support is available.

b. The final version of the programme proposal has been reviewed by an expert external to the institution, prior to submission to the Commission.[1]

c. The proposed programme is non-duplicative of offerings elsewhere in the region or represents necessary duplication, or market demand demonstrably justifies further capacity.

d. The nature of the proposed programme is such that it can best be offered at the institution in question.

e. Employability and student demand for such a programme favour the implementation of the proposed programme.

[1] The selected expert(s), recognized scholars in the field of the proposal, are expected to be selected according to established standards (are recognized scholars in the field of the proposal, have not studied at, collaborated with or worked for the submitting institution within the past seven years, and are not in any potential conflict of interest among other standards) and their Terms of Reference are expected to cover at a minimum the elements highlighted in Appendix V, Generic Terms of Reference for External Reviewers.

8.1 Using the following table, list (1) the academic staff to be involved in the programme, and (2) the research support accorded to professors in the past with a record of publications, especially in refereed journals.

Name, Rank, and Status	**Highest Degree held and university that granted it and year obtained**	**Specialty**	**Source of Grants received**	**Grants Total amount last 3 years**	**# of refereed publications last 5 years**
e.g. John Doe Associate Part-time	PhD McGill University 1979	Business management	University SSHRC	$18,500	10

8.2 Include the CVs prepared according to the guidelines below for all academic staff to be directly involved in the programme as an appendix to the proposal.

Guidelines for the preparation of faculty curriculum vitae:

8.2.1 Name: with rank, status (tenured, contract, etc.).

8.2.2 Degrees: designation, institution, department, year.

8.2.3 Employment history: dates, rank/position, department, institution/firm, including current full-time position and link to the programme under review.

8.2.4 Academic honours: such as F.R.S., F.R.S.C., Governor General's Award, honorary degrees, or equivalent.

8.2.5 Scholarly and professional academic activities: past 7 years only (e.g., executive and editorial positions but ***not*** memberships; **invited** presentations at national or international conferences. Please do not list manuscript and grant application reviews).

8.2.6 Graduate supervisions: career numbers - master's/doctoral; completed/in progress. Please distinguish between supervision, co-supervision and supervisory committee membership and distinguish between supervisions in the programme under review and in other programs, if appropriate. Provide a list of the theses or projects supervised (not participation on supervisory committees) during the last seven years with name of student, title of thesis or project (specify), date of first registration and date of completion.

8.2.7 Graduate courses: past 7 years, by year.

8.2.8 **External** research funding: past 7 years only, by year, indicating source (granting councils, industry, government, foundations, other external); amount; purpose (operating, travel, publication, equipment, etc.); if group grant, indicate the number of grantees and whether principal or co-applicant.

8.2.9 **Internal** research funding. This includes university funds, SSHRC minor grants awarded through the university, etc.

8.2.10 Publications

8.2.10.1 Life-time summary (count) according to the following categories:

- scholarly books
  - authored
  - edited
- chapters in books
- papers in ***refereed*** journals
- papers in ***refereed*** conference proceedings
- major invited contributions and/or technical reports
- abstracts and/or papers read
- others (e.g., workshops presented, other types of publications)

8.2.10.2 Details for the past 7 years (same categories as above), in chronological order. Please give full citation, including page numbers for books, chapters and journal articles and names of authors in the order in which they appear on the publication.

Note: For some faculty members (e.g., in the performing arts) it may be more appropriate to list exhibitions/performances, by year (for the past seven years), indicating the nature of the exhibition/performance (e.g., juried; local/national/ international; public/competition; and so forth).

8.3 Additional information required to demonstrate that a critical mass of research-active faculty exist, that the current (or planned) faculty complement provides sufficient breadth of disciplinary expertise, and, in the case of a research-based programme, that a strong research focus

exists within the unit proposing the programme (as evidenced by grants, publications and seminars, etc.).

8.4 In the case of research-based degree programmes, a demonstration of faculty's ability to provide long-term supervisory capacity and supervisory committee membership.

8.5 Description/evidence that an appropriate structure(s) (such as an Office of Graduate Studies) are in place to support the programme.

8.6 A more detailed list of available physical and human support facilities, e.g., library resources (holdings ratios among other measures)/access to scholarly communications; laboratories, instruments, computer backup, technician backup, graduate student services, etc. than would be given for undergraduate programmes.

8.7 Description of student financial support available, especially in the case of a doctoral programme, including a description of available sources (including amounts) for financial student support.

8.8 Evidence of the existence of an appropriate support network of related programmes (undergraduate and as relevant, graduate) at the submitting institution.

8.9 Information confirming that the proposed programme is non-duplicative of offerings elsewhere in the region or represents necessary duplication, or market demand demonstrably justifies further capacity.

8.10 Information to demonstrate that the nature of the proposed programme is such that it can best be offered at the institution in question.

8.11 Description of the review process of the programme proposal by an expert external to the institution selected according to established standards (are recognized scholars in the field of the proposal, have not studied at, collaborated with or worked for the submitting institution within the past seven years, and are not in any potential conflict of interest among other key standards). The expert's Terms of Reference are expected to cover at a minimum the elements highlighted in the Generic Terms of Reference of External Reviewers (Appendix V).

8.12 Any other information the submitting institution believes would assist the Commission in completing its assessment of the proposed new graduate programme.

APPENDIX II
GUIDELINES FOR THE PREPARATION OF PROPOSALS TO MODIFY PROGRAMMES

The Commission acknowledges that not all the information requested will be available for each and every proposal. The absence of information must, however, be noted and explained. The key is to address the assessment criteria, which are defined on pages 10 and 11 of the Policy. The definition of programme modifications can be found on page 7 of the Policy.

1. PROGRAMME IDENTIFICATION

1.1 Submitting institution(s)
1.2 Faculty
1.3 School
1.4 Department
1.5 Programme name and level
1.6 Credential(s) granted
1.7 Proposed starting date
1.8 Institutional programme code as stored in the post-secondary institution's administrative files that is reported under Enhanced Student Information System (ESIS) (element IP 2000)

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED PROGRAMME MODIFICATION

2.1 Description of the type of change, e.g. course change, change to co-op, change to distance education, etc.

2.2 Description of the purpose of the change, e.g. following trends, accommodating the clientele to be served, establishing a better focus, resulting from an external review (provide details).

2.3 Side-by-side comparison between the current and the modified programmes of:

2.3.1 Programme objectives.
2.3.2 Overall programme structure.
2.3.3 Anticipated student/graduates outcomes and their relevance.
2.3.4 Admission requirements, standards, etc.
2.3.5 Courses required (course name and number; whether existent or planned for the modified programme, its status in the programme (optional or compulsory); brief description of the course (for example calendar entry) if new or modified). Changes to programme duration should be stated and explained.

2.3.6 Other special requirements such as thesis, practicum, apprenticeship, etc.

2.3.7 Method of programme delivery (e.g. traditional classroom, distance education, co-operative education or a combination).

2.3.8 In the case of articulated programmes, changes to the inter-institutional arrangement should be stated and explained.

2.4 Impact of the change on human, physical and financial resources, to include anticipated impact on expenditures and revenues.

2.5 Potential impact of the change on other programmes at the institution or at other institutions in the region.

2.6 An indication of other institutions involved, or that have been consulted.

2.7 Any other information the institution feels will assist the Commission in its understanding and assessment of the proposed modification. Reports of internal or external review would be helpful.

APPENDIX III
GUIDELINES FOR THE PREPARATION OF PROPOSALS TO TERMINATE PROGRAMMES

The Commission acknowledges that not all the information requested will be available for each and every proposal. The absence of information must, however, be noted and explained. The key is to address the assessment criteria, which are defined on pages 10 and 11 of the Policy. The definition of programme termination may be found on page 8 of the Policy.

1. PROGRAMME IDENTIFICATION

1.1 Submitting institution(s)
1.2 Faculty
1.3 School
1.4 Department
1.5 Programme name and level
1.6 Credential(s) granted
1.7 Proposed termination date
1.8 Institutional programme code as stored in the post-secondary institution's administrative files that is reported under Enhanced Student Information System (ESIS) (element IP 2000)

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED PROGRAMME TERMINATION

2.1 Rationale for programme termination.

2.2 Description of the timeframe/phase-out plan for the existing programme and students.

2.2.1 Date of suspension of new enrollments.
2.2.2 Date of completion of last student enrolled.
2.2.3 Alternative programmes for existing students, if any.

2.3 In the case of professional, semi-professional, articulated, and co-op programmes, other stakeholders and/or partners may be involved. Stakeholders may play a role in programme delivery, accreditation, student placements, etc., and, in some instances, be responsible for the supply side of graduates from particular programmes. For example, teacher education programmes, health and health-related programmes, law, social work, criminology, foods and nutrition programmes, and articulated programmes. In general for these programme types, or other programmes which directly involve other stakeholders, institutions must provide:

2.3.1 Evidence that other institutions and stakeholders involved have been consulted.

2.3.2 Verification/confirmation from stakeholders that planned programme termination(s) are known and agreed upon. (This could include governments, public and private institutions, community colleges, other universities.)

2.4 Any other information the institution feels will assist the Commission in its understanding of the proposed termination. Reports of internal or external review would be helpful.

APPENDIX IV
GUIDELINES FOR THE PREPARATION OF PROPOSALS FOR NEW ARTICULATED PROGRAMMES

The Commission acknowledges that not all the information requested will be available for each and every proposal. The absence of information must, however, be noted and explained. The key is to address the assessment criteria listed below and further defined on pages 10 and 11 of the Policy. The definition of articulated programmes can be found on pages 6 and 7 of the Policy.

1. PROGRAMME IDENTIFICATION

1.1 Participating (submitting) institutions
1.2 Inter-institutional coordinating mechanism (see below, section 7)
1.3 Academic units responsible for the programme at each participating institution
1.4 Programme name, credential(s) awarded
1.5 Proposed starting date

2. PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION

This section of the proposal must provide the information necessary to meet the following assessment criterion: "clearly defined programme objectives and structure, to include references to optimum programme length, as well as a demonstration that the programme name and credential granted adequately capture the programme content ("truth in advertising")."

2.1 Explicit statement with respect to the value added by combining components of a programme at one level with components of a programme at another level.

2.2 Proposed structure and content, addressing the following three major components:

a. ***Occupational content***, i.e., course content directly related to the practice of an occupation in the field;
b. ***Occupationally related content***, i.e., courses usually delivered, especially at the upper level, by a university (English, Political Science, History, Psychology, Management, etc.), where the content has been tailored to the clientele of the programme (for example, English or Political Science for journalists);
c. Other ***academic content***, i.e., courses in other fields that contribute to the education of the student.

2.3 Listing of the courses required (course name and number, whether existent or planned, its status in the programme, i.e., compulsory vs. optional). Programme duration should be stated, as well as justified.

2.4 Practical requirements

Articulated programmes should attempt to integrate practical, hands-on training. This training can be provided to the student by different means, whether in the context of the learning programme or through internships or practicums. The proposal should describe if and how this type of training will be provided.

2.5 Method of programme delivery and location from the beginning to the end of the programme.

2.6 Summary of the admission policy and requirements.

The admission policy and requirements must be agreed upon by all the parties involved. The policy should include the customary elements of an admission policy. It can, and probably should, include several admission routes (prior learning assessment, credit transfer arrangements, etc.). The policy should address whether the province of residence would constitute a criterion for admission or exclusion, as is often the case with community college programmes. This element is important as the MPHEC expects that several of these articulated programmes could be unique in the region.

2.7 Comparison with similar programmes offered in the region, or elsewhere in Canada.

3. Student Outcomes and their Relevance

This section of the proposal must provide the information necessary to meet the following assessment criterion: "clearly defined anticipated student outcomes at the programme level and a demonstration of their relevance, including (1) learning outcomes, (2) graduate outcomes, and (3) other outcomes, as deemed appropriate/relevant in the context of a particular programme".

3.1 Identification of learning outcomes and their relevance to the proposed programme, such as critical thinking skills, breadth and depth of knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, analytical/problem-solving skills, occupation/licencing/accreditation requirements, communication skills, writing skills, etc.

3.2 Identification of graduate outcomes and their relevance to the proposed programme, such as graduate study, employability, licensing, accreditation, etc.

3.3 Identification of other outcomes and their relevance to the proposed programme, such as team building, leadership, social citizenship, etc.

4. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

This section of the proposal must provide the information necessary to meet the following assessment criterion: "evidence of the adequacy of resources (human, physical and financial) and references to the various sources of funding."

Considering the first five years (or the time frame in which the programme is expected to be fully operational) of the proposed programme.

4.1 Human and Physical Resource Implications

- 4.1.1 Extent to which current resources in terms of academic and support staff, library, space, equipment, etc. would be used.
- 4.1.2 Additional resources needed in the same areas.
- 4.1.3 Impact of the use of these resources on other programmes, including the elimination or the reduction of the scope of programmes to accommodate the new programme.
- 4.1.4 Estimate of resource needs and allocation beyond the first five years.

4.2 Financial Implications

- 4.2.1 Full and incremental costs of the programme for the first five years (or the time frame in which the programme is expected to be fully operational), broken down by major cost areas (academic salaries, other salaries, equipment, library acquisitions, space, etc.).
- 4.2.2 Expected sources of revenue to cover the costs.
- 4.2.3 Expectations in terms of additional capital or operating funding. Institutions are normally expected to find the financial resources for new programmes from increases in the regular budget, through reallocation, or from other sources.

5. Relationship to Other Programmes and Institutions

This section of the proposal must provide the information necessary to meet the following assessment criteria: "evidence of an environmental scan to identify similar or equivalent or comparable programmes in the region and elsewhere as appropriate" and "evidence of consultation with institutions offering similar or equivalent or comparable programmes."

5.1 Relationship and impact on existing programmes.

5.2 Comparison of the proposed programme with other comparable programmes offered elsewhere in the Maritimes and in Canada and rationale for the introduction of an additional programme, if a similar one is already offered in the region.

5.3 Possibilities of collaboration with other institutions in the region (university or non-university), or elsewhere in Canada, in the delivery of the programme and steps taken to that effect.

5.4 Evidence of consultation with institutions offering similar or equivalent or comparable programmes (at a minimum, details on the consultation process and letters or evidence of communication sent to other institutions requesting input; preferably, letters of comments from these institutions should be included).

6. Responsibility for the Programme

6.1 Description of how the following duties will be addressed on an ongoing basis:

- Admission policy, requirements and practices.
- Programme design.
- Standards for progression through, and graduation from, the programme.
- Information requirements for the transcripts at both institutions.
- Liaison with the specific academic unit assuming responsibility for the programme at each institution.
- In addition, a programme proposal should state how each institution will address the issue of student advising, and additional students services, where required.

6.2 Identification of the unit(s) responsible for the programme at each participating institution, detailing the various levels and types of responsibilities.

6.3 Description of the inter-institutional coordinating mechanism and its duties, given that when more than one institution is involved, the information flow between the participating institutions, as well as with the students must be facilitated. An example of such a coordinating mechanism is a joint programme committee comprising representatives of both teaching and administrative staff from major participating sectors (departments, disciplines, etc.) and institutions, as well as students. However, other mechanisms may be just as suitable.

7. PROGRAMME NEED

This section of the proposal must provide the information necessary to meet the following assessment criteria: "evidence of need" and "evidence of student demand".

7.1 The social (local, regional, national) need(s) met by graduates from such programmes as documented by, among other things, analysis of the evolution of the discipline, labour market analysis, demand for graduates, etc. This evidence should rely on external sources (leading scholars, government agencies, employers, professional organizations, etc.).

7.2 Consultation with employers and/or professional organizations as to the current and anticipated job market; employability data.

7.3 Priority within each institution's programme structure and development.

7.4 Student demand.

7.5 Clientele (expected enrolment, enrolment limits or expected maximum enrolment, and clientele sources).

7.6 The need for a broader-based training that would include general university level competencies.

7.7 Any accreditation requirements.

8. Additional Inter-Institutional Arrangements

Evidence should be provided that inter-institutional arrangements are in place to facilitate the following:

8.1 Student transfer from one institution to the other.

8.2 Cost- and revenue-sharing, both in the short term (implementation of the programme) and in the long term (maintenance and upgrades). This includes an agreement to the effect that each institution will be funded directly for the part of the programme they deliver, when students are registered with and pay fees to the particular institution where they are taking the courses. However, when students are moving from one institution to the other, in any given term or year, other arrangements should probably be made.

8.3 Clarification about enrolment count for every year or term of the programme. When students will be straddling both institutions at one point in the programme, or throughout, the institutions should suggest how students should be considered for enrolment count purposes.

9. Linkages to the Labour Market

This section of the proposal must provide the information necessary to meet the following assessment criterion "evidence of need".

9.1 Evidence of linkages to the labour market should be provided; this includes, but is not limited to, evidence of consultation with respect to both programme need and programme design. Articulated programmes should have a close connection with the practical requirements of the labour market.

9.2 In addition to the inter-institutional coordinating mechanism, the programme should normally have the benefit of an advisory industry group. It should comprise a variety of employers and practitioners from the relevant field(s). This group would provide advice on programme design and marketplace requirements. It may be warranted in certain cases to subsume the industry advisory group with the inter-institutional coordinating mechanism.

10. Evaluation Policy

This section of the proposal must provide the information necessary to meet the following assessment criterion: "evidence of the involvement of peers and experts, normally external to the institution in the development of the proposed programme".

10.1 As with any other programme proposal, a proposal for an articulated programme should present the evaluation procedure and cycle that would follow the implementation of the programme. This procedure should include graduate follow-ups. Given that two (or more) institutions will be involved, each with their own internal review mechanisms, particular attention should be paid to the evaluation policy of articulated programmes. In particular, the policy should include the frequency and time line of the evaluation process; identify the coordinating unit responsible for the overall management of the assessment process and for defining the assessment criteria, and determine the procedures and areas of responsibilities to ensure a proper follow-up to the review.

11. Articulated Programmes at the Graduate Level

In addition to addressing all the information requirements identified within the previous sections of these Guidelines, an articulated programme at the graduate-level must meet the following information requirements.

Proposals for new graduate programmes are assessed through all previously listed assessment criteria as well as the following criteria:

a. Existence of an academic environment that supports scholarship such as original research, creativity and the advancement of professional knowledge, as relevant to the proposed programme. Academic environment is characterized, in the context of programme assessment at the graduate level, as follows:
   - a critical mass of research-active faculty and of graduate students;
   - sufficient breadth of disciplinary expertise among faculty;
   - an appropriate support network of related programmes (normally undergraduate and, where relevant, graduate);
   - capacity to provide a choice of advanced-level graduate courses;
   - evidence of sufficient library resources (as evidenced by holdings ratio among other measures) and access to scholarly communications for a graduate-level programme;
   - an appropriate structure (such as an Office of Graduate Studies) to support the programme, especially in the case of a doctoral programme; and

continued

- in the case of research-based (master's and doctoral) degree programmes, an appropriate academic environment is further characterized by
  - ➥ a strong research focus within the unit proposing the programme (as evidenced by peer reviewed grants and publications, as well as seminars, research colloquia, etc.);
  - ➥ evidence of faculty's ability to provide long-term supervisory capacity and supervisory committee membership; and
  - ➥ a demonstration that an appropriate level of student financial support is available.

b. The final version of the programme proposal has been reviewed by an expert external to the institution, prior to submission to the Commission.[1]

c. The proposed programme is non-duplicative of offerings elsewhere in the region or represents necessary duplication, or market demand demonstrably justifies further capacity.

d. The nature of the proposed programme is such that it can best be offered at the institution in question.

e. Employability and student demand for such a programme favour the implementation of the proposed programme.

11.1 Using the following table, list (1) the academic staff to be involved in the programme, and (2) the research support accorded to professors in the past with a record of publications, especially in refereed journals.

Name, Rank, and Status	Highest Degree held and university that granted it and year obtained	Specialty	Source of Grants received	Grants Total amount last 3 years	# of refereed publications last 5 years
e.g. John Doe Associate Part-time	PhD McGill University 1979	Business management	University SSHRC	$18,500	10

11.2 Include the CVs prepared according to the guidelines described below for all academic staff to be directly involved in the programme as an appendix to the proposal.

Guidelines for the preparation of faculty curriculum vitae:

11.2.1 Name: with rank, status (tenured, contract, etc.).

11.2.2 Degrees: designation, institution, department, year.

[1] The selected expert(s), recognized scholars in the field of the proposal, are expected to be selected according to established standards (are recognized scholars in the field of the proposal, have not studied at, collaborated with or worked for the submitting institution within the past seven years, and are not in any potential conflict of interest among other standards) and their Terms of Reference are expected to cover at a minimum the elements highlighted in Appendix V.

11.2.3 Employment history: dates, rank/position, department, institution/firm, including current full-time position and link to the programme under review.

11.2.4 Academic honours: such as F.R.S., F.R.S.C., Governor General's Award, honorary degrees, or equivalent.

11.2.5 Scholarly and professional academic activities: past 7 years only (e.g., executive and editorial positions but ***not*** memberships; **invited** presentations at national or international conferences. Please do not list manuscript and grant application reviews).

11.2.6 Graduate supervisions: career numbers - master's/doctoral; completed/in progress. Please distinguish between supervision, co-supervision and supervisory committee membership and distinguish between supervisions in the programme under review and in other programs, if appropriate. Provide a list of the theses or projects supervised (not participation on supervisory committees) during the last seven years with name of student, title of thesis or project (specify), date of first registration and date of completion.

11.2.7 Graduate courses: past 7 years, by year.

11.2.8 **External** research funding: past 7 years only, by year, indicating source (granting councils, industry, government, foundations, other external); amount; purpose (operating, travel, publication, equipment, etc.); if group grant, indicate the number of grantees and whether principal or co-applicant.

11.2.9 **Internal** research funding. This includes university funds, SSHRC minor grants awarded through the university, etc.

11.2.10 Publications

11.2.10.1 Life-time summary (count) according to the following categories:

- scholarly books
  - authored
  - edited
- chapters in books
- papers in ***refereed*** journals
- papers in ***refereed*** conference proceedings
- major invited contributions and/or technical reports
- abstracts and/or papers read
- others (e.g., workshops presented, other types of publications)

11.2.10.2 Details for the past 7 years (same categories as above), in chronological order. Please give full citation, including page numbers for books, chapters and journal articles and names of authors in the order in which they appear on the publication.

Note: For some faculty members (e.g., in the performing arts) it may be more appropriate to list exhibitions/performances, by year (for the past seven years), indicating the nature of the exhibition/performance (e.g., juried; local/national/ international; public/competition; and so forth).

11.3 Additional information required to demonstrate that a critical mass of research-active faculty exist, that the current (or planned) faculty complement provides sufficient breadth of disciplinary expertise, and, in the case of a research-based programme, that a strong research focus exists within the unit proposing the programme (as evidenced by grants, publications and seminars, etc.).

11.4 In the case of research-based degree programmes, a demonstration of faculty's ability to provide long-term supervisory capacity and supervisory committee membership.

11.5 Description/evidence that an appropriate structure(s) (such as an Office of Graduate Studies) are in place to support the programme.

11.6 A more detailed list of available physical and human support facilities, e.g.: library resources (holdings ratios among other measures)/access to scholarly communications; laboratories, instruments, computer backup, technician backup, graduate student services, etc. than would be given for undergraduate programmes.

11.7 Description of student financial support available, especially in the case of a doctoral programme, including a description of available sources (including amounts) for financial student support.

11.8 Evidence of the existence of an appropriate support network of related programmes (undergraduate and as relevant, graduate) at the submitting institution.

11.9 Information confirming that the proposed programme is non-duplicative of offerings elsewhere in the region or represents necessary duplication, or market demand demonstrably justifies further capacity.

11.10 Information to demonstrate that the nature of the proposed programme is such that it can best be offered at the institution in question.

11.11 Description of the review process of the programme proposal by an expert external to the institution selected according to established standards (are recognized scholars in the field of the proposal, have not studied at, collaborated with or worked for the submitting institution within the past seven years, and are not in any potential conflict of interest among other key standards). The expert's Terms of Reference are expected to cover at a minimum the elements highlighted in the Generic Terms of Reference of External Reviewers (Appendix V).

11.12 Any other information the submitting institution believes would assist the Commission in completing its assessment of the proposed new graduate programme.

APPENDIX V
GENERIC TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR EXTERNAL REVIEWERS (GRADUATE PROGRAMMES)

1. The consultant is asked to provide a report.

2. The report is to be based on:

   2.1 A one to two-day site visit organized by the submitting institution and the consultant.

   2.2 The evaluation of the programme proposal submitted by the institution, as well as any other pertinent information provided to or procured by the consultant.

   2.3 The consultant's expertise in the field and knowledge of similar programmes elsewhere in Canada or in North America.

3. The report will range from five to fifteen pages.

4. Standard elements of the assessment will include:

   4.1 Assessment of programme content, structure, requirements, in relation to normally accepted and expected standards of similar programmes and graduates, in Canada and elsewhere, as well as in relation to programme title and credential awarded. The assessment will include a comment on the appropriateness of the proposed level of study to respond to identified needs, as well as the appropriateness of the proposed delivery mode(s).

   4.2 As appropriate, a comparison with other comparable programmes.

   4.3 Evaluation of the adequacy of human resources available for programme implementation and operation, (i.e. number and quality of faculty, both current and proposed) and, as appropriate, for the areas of specialization identified. Specifically, the report should provide answers to:
   - Is there an appropriate distribution of expertise and strengths for the proposed programme?
   - Does the faculty complement provide sufficient depth and breadth of research expertise and linkages with both the national (or international, as appropriate) research community and

practitioners to provide an appropriate intellectual environment for graduate students, given the programme area?

- In your view, can the current faculty complement operate successfully the proposed graduate programme?

4.4 Evaluation of the adequacy of physical resources available for programme implementation and operation, taking into account projected enrolments (i.e., library holdings, budget allocation, etc). Specifically, are the equipment, services, libraries and other associated facilities adequate for the proposed programme?

4.5 Evaluation of the appropriateness of the organizational environment in providing this programme. Specifically, the report should comment on whether or not adequate procedures have been put in place for regular review and evaluation of the quality of the graduate programme.

4.6 Comment on the likely stability of the programme and the resources allocated to it.

4.7 Opportunities presented by present and anticipated labour market trends to graduates of the programme, given the proposed focus.

5. The consultant is asked to comment, as appropriate, on the following assessment criteria which the Commission assess graduate programmes:

1. *Clearly defined **programme objectives and structure**, including references to optimum programme length, as well as a demonstration that the programme name and credential granted adequately capture the programme content ("truth in advertising").*

2. *Clearly defined **anticipated student outcomes** at the programme level and a demonstration of their relevance, including (1) learning outcomes, (2) graduate outcomes, and (3) other outcomes, as deemed appropriate/relevant in the context of a particular programme.*

3. *Evidence of the **adequacy of resources** (human, physical and financial) and references to the various sources of funding.*

4. *Evidence of the **involvement of peers and experts**, normally external to the institution in the development of the proposed programme. Each external expert should be identified and their written assessment or comments on the proposed programme should be included.*

5. *Evidence of an **environmental scan** to identify similar or equivalent or comparable programmes in the region and elsewhere as appropriate.*

6. *Evidence of **consultation** with institutions offering similar or equivalent or comparable programmes (at a minimum, letters or evidence of communication sent to other institutions requesting input; preferably, written comments from these institutions should be included). When conflicting views about the programme emerge from the distribution process, the Chair of the Academic Advisory Committee and/or the Chair of the Commission will be consulted. (This does not imply that an in-depth review of the programme will take place.)*

7. *Evidence of **need**, as documented by, among other things, analysis of the evolution of the discipline: labour market analysis; demand for graduates; consultation with potential employers and professional organization(s). This evidence should rely on external sources such as leading scholars, government agencies, employers, professional organizations, etc.*

8. *Evidence of **student demand**.*

9. *Proposals for **new graduate programmes** are assessed through all previously listed assessment criteria as well as the following criteria:*

   a. *Existence of an academic environment that supports scholarship such as original research, creativity and the advancement of professional knowledge, as relevant to the proposed programme. Academic environment is characterized, in the context of programme assessment at the graduate level, as follows:*
      - *a critical mass of research-active faculty and of graduate students;*
      - *sufficient breadth of disciplinary expertise among faculty;*
      - *an appropriate support network of related programmes (normally undergraduate and, where relevant, graduate);*
      - *capacity to provide a choice of advanced-level graduate courses;*
      - *evidence of sufficient library resources (as evidenced by holdings ratio among other measures) and access to scholarly communications for a graduate-level programme;*
      - *an appropriate structure (such as an Office of Graduate Studies) to support the programme, especially in the case of a doctoral programme; and*
      - *in the case of research-based (master's and doctoral) degree programmes, an appropriate academic environment is further characterized by*
        - ➥ *a strong research focus within the unit proposing the programme (as evidenced by peer reviewed grants and publications, as well as seminars, research colloquia etc.);*

- ➥ *evidence of faculty's ability to provide long-term supervisory capacity and supervisory committee membership; and*
- ➥ *a demonstration that an appropriate level of student financial support is available.*

b. *The final version of the programme proposal has been reviewed by an expert external to the institution, prior to submission to the Commission.*
c. *The proposed programme is non-duplicative of offerings elsewhere in the region or represents necessary duplication, or market demand demonstrably justifies further capacity;*
d. *The nature of the proposed programme is such that it can best be offered at the institution in question*
e. *Employability and student demand for such a programme favour the implementation of the proposed programme.*

6. The report should conclude with one of the following recommendations, with additional comments as deemed useful by the reviewer.

6.1 I recommend approval of the programme as presented.
6.2 I recommend approval of the programme with the following changes (please specify).
6.3 I recommend that a revised programme proposal be drafted, prior to a decision being made, to include (please specify).
6.4 I recommend that the programme not be approved.

7. The report can include specific recommendations regarding any of the elements noted above, including resources, opportunities for collaboration, periodic programme review, etc. as the consultant would judge important and useful.

8. Any other additional comments judged important or useful by the consultant.

APPENDIX VI
AAU-MPHEC ACADEMIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE - TERMS OF REFERENCE

PURPOSE

1. To advise and assist the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission, an agency of the Council of Maritime Premiers, in assuring the quality of new and modified academic programmes at post-secondary institutions included within its scope and as defined below.

FUNCTION

2. The Committee shall:

- Carry out in-depth assessments of new or modified post-secondary programmes, within the parameters established by the Commission as described in the Quality Assurance Policy document.
- As appropriate, review and comment on the institutional assessment of programmes approved by the MPHEC through a cursory review process.
- Advise the Commission on the appropriate evolution of the Quality Assurance Policy document, in the light of experience.
- Advise the Commission on issues to be researched and assist in carrying out projects deemed necessary and appropriate, by the Committee and/or the Commission, as they relate to quality assurance or academic planning.

OBJECTIVE OF THE REVIEW OF PROGRAMME PROPOSALS

3. The overall objective of the review, as stated in the Commission Quality Assurance Policy, is to ascertain the suitability of the programme given its objectives, structure, institutional appropriateness, resources, stated student outcomes and their relevance. The review will also provide a regional context for the programme and ensure unwarranted duplication is avoided.

REVIEW PROCESS

4. In-depth programme assessments, for which the Academic Advisory Committee is responsible, may be undertaken when a programme proposal does not satisfactorily meet the criteria for cursory review. The process is as follows:

   - Staff prepares an analysis of the proposal and identifies any issues which arise.
   - The Academic Advisory Committee reviews the proposal and any comments received from other institutions and other stakeholder groups.
   - The Committee may request additional information and/or the advice of experts in the field.
   - The Committee may elect to forward suggestions or recommendations to the institution to resolve the issues. Once the issues are resolved, or once the Committee concludes that resolution is not possible, the Committee then forwards its final recommendation to the Commission.

RESPONSIBILITY OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

5. In addition to carrying out in-depth assessments and reviewing institutional programme assessments, Committee members are also responsible to review and comment when appropriate, on an individual basis, on all programme proposals being assessed through a cursory review process, given that these proposals will not be discussed in Committee meetings.

MEMBERSHIP

6. The Committee is composed of eight members, including the Chair.

7. Three members are appointed by the Chair of the Commission, for a term of three years.
8. Three members are appointed by the Association of Atlantic Universities (AAU), for a term of three years.

9. Two Committee members are students of which one is selected by the AAU and the other by the MPHEC following a joint process for nominations.

10. At least one of the members has expertise with community college programmes or university/college articulation.

11. One member is also a member of the Quality Assurance Monitoring Committee.

12. The terms should overlap to ensure continuity.

CHAIR

13. The Chair of the Committee is a Commission member appointed to the Committee and designated by the Chair of the Commission.

QUORUM

14. A minimum of two members, including the Chair, appointed by the Commission Chair and a minimum of two members appointed by the AAU represent quorum.

COMMITTEE'S SCOPE OF AUTHORITY

15. Committees are instruments of the Commission. A committee's work products are the property of the Commission.

16. Committee members and chairs may not speak or act for the Commission except when formally given such authority for specific and time-limited purposes. Such authority will be carefully stated in order not to conflict with the authority delegated to the Chair of the Commission and the Chief Executive Officer of the Commission. Committee members and chairs cannot exercise authority over staff, and normally have no direct dealings with staff operations. Extraordinary requests for resources made by a committee must be approved by the Commission.

LINK TO THE ASSOCIATION OF ATLANTIC UNIVERSITIES

17. The Association of Atlantic Universities (AAU) representatives to this Committee shall report to the AAU Secretariat any issues/opportunities that require the action/involvement of the member institutions. Minutes of meetings shall be forwarded to the AAU Secretariat in a timely fashion.

STAFFING

18. The attendance of the Chief Executive Officer, or designate (normally, a staff member), at all committee meetings as a resource and staff support is essential to the effective work of committees and to ensure proper and on-going alignment with the Commission's business plan. However, staff's primary accountability is to the Commission as a whole even when assigned the role of committee resource.

19. The Committee has the authority to engage outside consultants as required to assist in its functions.

POLICY ON CONFLICT OF INTEREST

20. As relevant, the Commission's Policy on Conflict of Interest applies to the Committee:

> Members shall act at all times in the best interests of the Commission rather than particular interests or constituencies. This means setting aside personal self-interest and performing their duties in transaction of the affairs of the Commission in such a manner that promotes public confidence and trust in the integrity, objectivity and impartiality of the governing body.
>
> No member shall directly or indirectly receive any profit from his/her position as such, provided that members may be paid reasonable expenses incurred by them in the performance of their duties and the honorarium, as set by the appropriate authorities. The interests of immediate family members or close personal or business associates of a member are considered to also be the interests of the member.
>
> Members are expected to avoid conflicts or the appearance of conflicts between their duties as a public appointee and their personal or business interest.
>
> An actual or potential conflict of interest arises when a member is placed in a situation in which his or her personal interests, financial or otherwise, or the interests of an immediate family member or of a person with whom there exists, or has recently existed, an intimate relationship, conflict or appear to conflict with the member's responsibilities to the Commission, and the public interest.
>
> Members shall not use information obtained as a result of their appointment for personal or commercial benefit.
>
> A conflict of interest may be "real", "potential" or "perceived"; the same duty to disclose applies to each.

Full disclosure, in itself, does not remove a conflict of interest.

Principles for managing conflicts of interests

In consultation with the member, and in the light of the specific nature of the conflict, the Chair and member may determine the appropriate response to the circumstance, as follows:

- the member must withdraw from any discussion or decision-making process leading to a recommendation on the proposal; or
- the member may remain in the meeting and participate in the discussion but refrain from voting; or,
- the member may remain in the meeting and participate in the discussion and in the voting.

In all cases the Chair will advise the governing body as a whole of the conflict, and of the outcome above, with reasons.

Should the Chair be in a conflict of interest, the Chair will either (a) withdraw from any discussion or decision-making process leading to a recommendation on the proposal, or (b) ask the governing body to decide whether the Chair may remain in the meeting, participate in the discussion while refraining from voting, or remain in the meeting, participate in the discussion and in the voting.

It is the responsibility of other members who are aware of a real, potential or perceived conflict of interest on the part of a fellow member to raise the issue for clarification, first with the member and, if still unresolved, with the Chair.

Rules with regards to programme proposals or specific funding request/issue

When Commission members (or Committee members) are directly associated with the university whose programme proposal or funding request is under consideration, the member must, at a minimum, abstain from the final vote (or final recommendation/advice to Commission in the case of a committee). The abstention is noted in the minutes if requested by the member or Chair. In the event that this member is the Committee Chair, an alternate Chair is assigned for the consideration of the programme proposal in question.

CHAPTER III

MONITORING INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

1. Objective

The monitoring of quality assurance procedures and practices is especially important given that the cornerstone of quality assurance is self-assessment by the institutions.

The specific objective of the MPHEC monitoring function is to ascertain that the procedures used by institutions to assess the quality of existing programmes, and other functions as appropriate, are performing adequately as quality control mechanisms.

The purpose of the monitoring process is to answer the following two questions: first, "Is the institution following its own quality assurance policy?", and second, "Could the institution's quality assurance policy be modified to better ensure the quality of its academic programmes and services or is it satisfactory as is?".

The process is formative; institutional policies and practices are reviewed with a view to provide assistance and advice to institutions.

2. Focus

The monitoring function focuses on three elements:

- The institutional quality assurance policy;
- The institution's quality assessment practices; and
- Follow-up mechanisms.

The process pays particular attention to each institution's mission and values.

3. Scope

Given that the Commission's mandate provides for a direct focus on university education, only degree-granting institutions on the MPHEC schedule are reviewed in the context of this policy. The following institutions are included in the process:

Acadia University
Atlantic School of Theology
Cape Breton University
Dalhousie University
Mount Allison University
Mount Saint Vincent University
Nova Scotia Agricultural College
Nova Scotia College of Art and Design
St. Francis Xavier University
Saint Mary's University
St. Thomas University
Université de Moncton
Université Sainte-Anne
University of King's College
University of New Brunswick
University of Prince Edward Island

4. Cycle

The monitoring function will be performed once at each institution in a seven-year cycle. Over the course of the seven-year cycle, two reviews per year will be conducted for the first five years, while three reviews will be conducted in each of the remaining two years of the cycle. The particular order will be established by the MPHEC Quality Assurance Monitoring Committee, in consultation with the institutions.

5. A Quality Assurance Monit ng Committee

The Quality Assurance Monitoring Committee carries out the monitoring function on behalf of the Commission. It is essentially established as a peer review committee. The members are respected by the post-secondary education community, have some appreciation for, and expertise in, quality assurance and periodic programme and unit reviews, and are not current members of an institution's senior administration. The Terms of Reference of the Committee are appended to the policy.

6. Process and outcomes

The monitoring process takes place over a 10 to 12-month period. Two or three institutions are reviewed simultaneously.

The quality assurance monitoring process includes the following steps:

Step 1 Initial meeting

Normally, the first step of the process is a meeting to clarify the expectations and the process, as well as to establish the time frame for each step.

Step 2 ***Institutional Quality Assurance Report***

The institutional quality assurance report focusses on the quality assessment and improvement processes in place at the institution under review. It is both descriptive *and* analytical and includes clear statements as to how well the quality assessment and quality improvement processes are performing, and whether these processes are adequate for the task.

The institutional quality assurance report provides answers to the two key questions guiding the monitoring process: first, "Is the institution following its own quality assurance policy?", and second, "Could the institution's quality assurance policy be modified to better ensure the quality of its academic programmes and services or is it satisfactory as is?".

The institution has a three- to four-month period after the initial meeting to produce the institutional quality assurance report and forward it to the MPHEC.

Step 3 Analysis of all pertinent documentation

Over the course of the following six to twelve weeks, the Committee and staff analyze the documentation and request any additional information deemed necessary.

The basis of the Committee's report is the documentation forwarded by the institution, to include:

1. The institutional quality assurance policy. The Monitoring Committee uses the policy components and assessment criteria outlined elsewhere in the MPHEC Quality Assurance Policy as the backdrop to review each institutional policy;
2. The institutional quality assurance report;
3. The list of all programme or unit assessments conducted in the last seven years. The institution may indicate which units or programmes in that list reflect particularly well the institution's mission and values; and
4. The schedule of forthcoming assessments.

From the list of assessments carried out by the institution, the Committee selects a number of assessments, normally from three to five, for further review by the Committee. The programme or unit assessments are chosen to reflect as accurately as possible the institution's mission and values. The institution is then asked to forward:

5. The complete dossier of these assessments.

Step 4 On-site visit

The on-site visit completes the monitoring of institutional policy and practices. The Committee meets with individuals identified during Step 2 and those identified during consultations with the institution in preparation for the visit. The objective of the on-site visit is to validate the statements offered in the institutional quality assurance report, as well as to verify elements contained in the assessments reviewed by the Committee.

Step 5 Report

The Committee prepares a report on its findings and formulates recommendations, first and foremost, to the institution. The report is forwarded to the institution to validate factual information within eight to twelve weeks following the on-site visit. The institution can submit any correction to the report within 30 days of receipt.

The report, once finalised, is forwarded a second time to the institution to provide an official initial response to the report that will be appended to the final version of the report.

The report is then submitted to the Commission, accompanied by the comments and advice when applicable of the AAU-MPHEC Academic Advisory Committee. Once approved by the Commission, the report is made available by request to the public, listed as an MPHEC publication, and mentioned in the annual report filed by MPHEC.

Step 6 Institutional response

The institution then develops a plan of action to respond to the report, to be filed with the MPHEC no later than one year following the publication of the monitoring report. The Quality Assurance Monitoring Committee and the Commission may comment and respond to the plan of action. A brief description of the institution's plan of action, and of the Committee's or Commission's response, when applicable, are included in the next MPHEC annual report.

7. Review of the MPHEC monitoring process

At the end of the first cycle, a 12-month hiatus will be imposed to review and analyze the process. Institutions will be consulted in this review. Among the questions to be answered at that time are:

1. Has the process met the anticipated objectives and outcomes?
2. What are its strengths and weaknesses?
3. How can it be improved?
4. Is there value in pursuing it into a second cycle?

GUIDELINES FOR INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICIES

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA FOR THE MPHEC MONITORING PROCESS

GUIDELINES FOR THE PREPARATION OF THE
INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY ASSURANCE REPORT

AAU-MPHEC QUALITY ASSURANCE MONITORING COMMITTEE
TERMS OF REFERENCE

APPENDIX I
GUIDELINES FOR INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICIES

I PURPOSE OF THE GUIDELINES

The aim of these guidelines is to assist the institutions in establishing or improving their policies and processes and to support the Commission when assessing the policies and processes in place.

II FOCUS OF THE INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

An institutional quality assurance policy should reflect the institution's mission and values. All institutions should have a quality assurance policy in place.

A quality assurance policy should focus on units (academic and other) and/or on programmes (or groups of programmes). The policy should include provisions to cover all the functions and units of the institution (research, administration, community service, etc.).

III OBJECTIVE OF THE INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

The institutional policy's objectives should be, at a minimum, to improve the quality of programmes and to ensure that stated student outcomes can be realized.

The purpose of the assessment itself should be to answer the following two questions: first, "Is the institution following its own quality assurance policy?", and second, "Could the institution's quality assurance policy be modified to better ensure the quality of its academic programmes and services or is it satisfactory as is?".

IV COMPONENTS OF AN INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

In addition to reflecting institutional mission and values, the institutional quality assurance policy should be comprehensive and apply to all programmes and units. It should also, at a minimum, address the following elements:

1. Identify the coordinating or administrative unit responsible for the overall management of the quality assurance process. This unit should be located at a higher echelon of the institution's administrative structure, and be accountable to the institution's leaders.

2. Define the assessment criteria (see section V).

3. Require a self-study component, usually involving faculty and students participating in the programme or unit. The self-study should be student-centred as it would aim, in most cases to assess the quality of learning. The self-study should be structured according to the defined assessment procedures criteria. When and where appropriate, the results of accreditation may be included and/or substituted for this component, or a portion thereof.

4. Entail an external review component, usually carried out by two experts external to the institution. As appropriate, the results of accreditation may be included and/or substituted for this component, or a portion thereof.

5. Incorporate the participation of faculty not directly involved in the reviewed programme (or discipline or unit).

6. Enable the participation of the wider network of stakeholders, such as employers, graduates, professional associations, the local community, etc.

7. Include appropriate mechanisms, that is at a minimum the procedures and areas of responsibility, to ensure a proper follow up to the assessment.

8. Establish the assessment cycle, which should not exceed seven years. Newly established programmes or units should be assessed once fully implemented, usually at the three- to five-year mark.

9. Include provisions to review the policy periodically.

The policy should be tabled with the MPHEC as the body responsible for overseing quality assurance.

V KEY ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The assessment procedures and criteria should be student-centred, and reflect institutional mission and values. The assessment criteria should be comprehensive (i.e., to include all programme and units) and address the following elements:

1. Assess intended and delivered curriculum;

2. Review teaching practices;

3. Clarify the expected outcomes for students;

4. Examine the degree to which those outcomes are realized;

5. Evaluate the appropriateness of support provided to students;

6. Appraise the research carried out by the academic unit or by faculty involved in the reviewed programme;

7. Value the contribution of the unit or programme to other aspects of the institutional mission (community service, for example); and

8. Value the contribution of the unit or programme to the larger community or society in general.

APPENDIX II
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA FOR THE MPHEC MONITORING PROCESS

I INTRODUCTION

The specific objective of the monitoring function is to review the policy, processes and procedures used by institutions to assess the quality of existing programmes and other functions as appropriate, to ensure they are performing adequately as quality control and quality improvement mechanisms.

The purpose of the Committee in carrying out the monitoring process is to provide answers to the following two questions: first, "Is the institution following its own quality assurance policy?", and second, "Could the institution's quality assurance policy be modified to better ensure the quality of its academic programmes and services or is it satisfactory as is?". The Committee will be assessing the institution's quality assurance policy and related processes, but will not be assessing the quality of specific programmes or units.

The process is intended to be formative; institutional policies and practices will be reviewed with a view to provide assistance and advice to institutions.

II ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

1. Institutional context of the policy

    1.1 The policy is consistent with the institution's mission and values.

2. General

    2.1 Scope of the policy is appropriate, i.e., the policy is comprehensive in terms of assessing all programmes and units.
    2.2 The policy follows the Commission's guidelines. Any discrepancy is explained/justified.
    2.3 The policy promotes *continuous* quality improvement.

3. Policy objectives

    3.1 Scope of the objectives is appropriate.
    3.2 Objectives linked to programme quality improvement.
    3.3 Objectives linked to decision-making process.
    3.4 Objectives linked to realization of stated student outcomes.

3.5 Objectives linked to the economic, cultural and social development of the university's communities.

4. Policy components

4.1 Assessment criteria are defined and are appropriate (to include the adequacy of financial, human and physical resources).
4.2 General guidelines for the programme/unit self-study are established and are appropriate.
4.3 The external review process is objective including clearly defined generic terms of reference for, and selection process for, experts.
4.4 Procedures allowing for the participation of students, faculty members, staff and the community-at-large are established.
4.5 (If the policy focuses on units) Mechanism(s) to assess interdisciplinary programmes, typically not examined when a policy focuses on units, exist and are appropriate.
4.6 Linkages between programme assessment and accreditation requirements are identified.
4.7 Schedule of programme/unit assessment is appropriate.
4.8 Procedures to review the policy itself are identified, including procedures to seek/include stakeholder input.

5. Policy implementation (assessment practices)

5.1 Programme/unit self-studies address the institution's assessment criteria.
5.2 Programme/unit self-studies include a component that is student-centered, as they aim, among other things, to assess the quality of learning.
5.3 Students, faculty members, staff and the community-at-large participate in the assessment process.
5.4 External review process is objective; experts selected during the peer review process have the appropriate expertise.
5.5 Policy and procedures monitor the continuing relevance of the programme.
5.6 Schedule of reviews is adhered to, or modifications to schedules can be reasonably explained or justified.
5.7 Required follow-up action is undertaken.
5.8 Policy is subject to regular review (and the review process includes procedures to seek stakeholder input).

6. Policy administration

6.1 Coordinating or administrative unit identified as the lead is appropriate.

6.2 Effective support has been offered to programmes and units under review.

6.3 Appropriate follow-up mechanisms are in place and are functioning appropriately.

6.4 Assessment results have been appropriately disseminated.

6.5 The process informs decision-making.

APPENDIX III
GUIDELINES FOR THE PREPARATION OF THE INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY ASSURANCE REPORT

I PURPOSE AND FOCUS OF THE MONITORING PROCESS

The specific objective of the monitoring function is to review the policy, processes and procedures used by institutions to assess the quality of existing programmes and other functions as appropriate, to ensure they are performing adequately as quality control and quality improvement mechanisms.

The process is intended to be formative; institutional policies and practices will be reviewed with a view to provide assistance and advice to institutions.

The overall monitoring process aims to provide answers to the following two questions:

1. Is the institution following its own quality assurance policy?
2. Could the institution's quality assurance policy be modified to better ensure the quality of its academic programmes and services or is it satisfactory as is?

The monitoring function focuses on three elements:

- The institutional quality assurance policy;
- The institution's quality assessment practices; and
- Follow-up mechanisms

II FOCUS OF THE INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY ASSURANCE REPORT

The institutional quality assurance report is both descriptive and analytical. It must include clear statements as to how well the quality assessment and quality improvement processes are performing, and whether these processes are adequate for the task.

The institutional quality assurance report should engage as many individuals involved in quality assurance within the institution as possible, in a frank, objective and balanced appraisal of strengths and areas for improvement. The institutional quality assurance report is the primary document on which the monitoring process is based and it is therefore important that it be well organized, clearly written and concise.

In answering the above, the institutional quality assurance report should provide the following:

a. What is the factual situation?
b. What is the institution's assessment of the situation?
c. How are the results addressed?

The institutional quality assurance report should only rarely exceed 30 pages, excluding appendices.

III SUGGESTED STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF THE INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY ASSURANCE REPORT

1. Description of the University's Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures

1.1 Brief history of the policy
1.2 Scope and objectives of the policy
1.3 Mechanism(s) in place to assess interdisciplinary programmes
1.4 Established assessment cycle schedule
1.5 Linkage between the policy's objectives and:
  a. programme quality improvement;
  b. the decision-making process within the institution;
  c. the realization of stated student outcomes; and
  d. the economic, cultural and social development of the institution's communities.
1.6 Link between the programme/unit assessment process and accreditation requirements
1.7 Assessment criteria
1.8 Guidelines for the preparation of the programme/unit self-study
1.9 Terms of reference and selection process of external reviewers
1.10 Procedures to allow for the participation of students, faculty members, staff, graduates, and the community-at-large
1.11 Procedures/timelines to review the policy itself; including procedures to seek/include stakeholder input on the policy as a whole
1.12 Any other element the institution believes the Committee must be aware of to proceed with the assessment of the policy

2. Assessment of the University's Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures

2.1 Policy Objectives

a. Extent to which the policy is consistent with the institution's mission and values
b. Extent to which the scope is appropriate
c. Extent to which policy promotes *continuous* quality improvement
d. Appropriateness of assessment criteria
e. Adaptability of self-study guidelines to the varying needs and contexts of individual programmes
f. Extent to which established guidelines ensure the external review process remains objective

2.2 Policy implementation

a. Extent to which the programme/unit self-studies address the institution's assessment criteria
b. Extent to which the programme/unit self-studies are student-centered
c. Extent to which the programme/unit self-studied aim to assess the quality of learning
d. Extent to which the policy and procedures monitor the continuing relevance of the programme/unit
e. Extent to which the process assesses of the adequacy of human, physical and financial resources
f. Appropriateness and effectiveness of the link between the programme/unit assessment process and accreditation requirements
g. Extent to which students, graduates, faculty members, staff and the community-at-large participate in the review process
h. Extent to which the external assessment process has been carried out in an objective fashion
i. Extent to which experts selected during the peer review process have the appropriate expertise
j. Extent to which the required follow-up action has generally been undertaken
k. Extent to which the policy has been reviewed (to include a description of the process, timeframe, extent to which stakeholder input was sought and included)

2.3 Policy Administration

a. Appropriateness and effectiveness of the lead coordinating or administrative unit
b. Effectiveness of support offered to programmes and units being assessed
c. Appropriateness and effectiveness of the follow-up mechanisms in place
d. Extent to which the assessment results have been appropriately disseminated
e. Extent to which the process has informed the decision-making process within the institution
f. Extent to which the schedule of assessments has been followed
g. Appropriateness of assessment schedule
h. Appropriateness of procedures/timelines to review the policy itself (including appropriateness of procedures to seek stakeholder input)

3. Conclusion

3.1 Is the university doing what it should be doing in the area of quality assurance?
3.2 Solutions to address any shortcomings.

Appendices (to institutional report)

I. Institutional policy
II. List of all programme or unit assessments conducted in the last seven years. (The institution may indicate which units or programmes in that list reflect particularly well the institution's mission and values.)
III. Schedule of forthcoming assessments.

APPENDIX IV
AAU-MPHEC QUALITY ASSURANCE MONITORING COMMITTEE - TERMS OF REFERENCE

PURPOSE

1. To advise and assist the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission, an agency of the Council of Maritime Premiers, in ensuring continuous improvement in the quality of academic programmes and of teaching at post-secondary institutions included within its scope by monitoring institutional quality assurance activities, as described in the MPHEC Quality Assurance Policy.

FUNCTION

2. The Committee shall:
   - Monitor the outcomes of institutional quality assessment policies and procedures, within the parameters established by the Commission. These parameters are described with details on the process in the Commission Quality Assurance Policy.
   - Suggest relevant research/publications to the Commission and assist in their preparation, as they relate to quality assurance.
   - Examine issues or carry out projects as the Commission may deem necessary and appropriate, as they relate to quality assurance.

OBJECTIVE OF THE MONITORING FUNCTION

3. The specific objective of the monitoring function is to ascertain that the procedures used by institutions to assess the quality of existing programmes, and other functions as appropriate, are performing adequately as quality control and quality improvement mechanisms.

4. The purpose of the Committee in carrying out the monitoring process is to provide answers to the following two questions: first, "Is the institution following its own quality assurance policy?", and second, "Could the institution's quality assurance policy be modified to better ensure the quality of its academic programmes and services or is satisfactory as is?"

5. The process is intended to be formative; institutional policies and practices will be reviewed with a view to provide assistance and advice to institutions.

MEMBERSHIP

6. The Committee will be composed of eight members including the Chair.

7. At least two Committee members are also Commission members.

8. At least three, but ideally four Committee members will be selected from a list of nominees suggested by the AAU, and at least one of the three/four members selected from the list of nominees suggested by the AAU must be a francophone.

9. Ideally, two Committee members are students.

10. Members are appointed for a three-year mandate.

11. Preferred profile of members
    - Appreciation for, and expertise in, quality assurance and periodic programme and unit reviews.
    - Respected by the post-secondary education community.
    - Not a current member of an institution's senior administration.
    - Preferably not a current public servant within a department of education.
    - Preferably not currently in the employ of an institution on the Commission's schedule.

CHAIR

12. The Chair of the Committee is one of the Commission members appointed to the Committee and is designated by the Chair of the Commission.

13. The Chair of the Committee chairs meetings.

REPORTING STRUCTURE

14. The Committee reports to the Commission. It shall report to the Commission at regular interval.

15. Monitoring reports are distributed to the AAU-MPHEC Academic Advisory Committee in advance of the Commission meeting to allow time for comment and advice.

Quorum

16. The Committee's quorum is defined as a majority of current members, that is 50% plus one, provided other alternatives, such as e-mail, faxes or telephone, be used for decisions if a quorum has not been achieved at a meeting.

Committee's Scope of Authority

17. Committees are instruments of the Commission. A committee's work products are the property of the Commission.

18. Committee members and chairs may not speak or act for the Commission except when formally given such authority for specific and time-limited purposes. Such authority will be carefully stated in order not to conflict with the authority delegated to the Chair of the Commission and the Chief Executive Officer of the Commission. Committee members and chairs cannot exercise authority over staff, and normally have no direct dealings with staff operations. Extraordinary requests for resources made by a committee must be approved by the Commission.

Link to the Association of Atlantic Universities

19. The Association of Atlantic Universities (AAU) representatives to this Committee shall report to the AAU Secretariat any issues/opportunities that require the action/involvement of the member institutions. Minutes of meetings shall be forwarded to the AAU Secretariat in a timely fashion.

Staffing

20. The attendance of the Chief Executive Officer, or designate (normally, a staff member), at all committee meetings as a resource and staff support is essential to the effective work of committees and to ensure proper and on-going alignment with the Commission's business plan. However, staff's primary accountability is to the Commission as a whole even when assigned the role of committee resource.

21. The Committee is allowed to engage outside consultants, as required, to assist in the monitoring functions.

POLICY ON CONFLICT OF INTEREST

22. As relevant, the Commission's Policy on Conflict of Interest applies to the Committee:

Members shall act at all times in the best interests of the Commission rather than particular interests or constituencies. This means setting aside personal self-interest and performing their duties in transaction of the affairs of the Commission in such a manner that promotes public confidence and trust in the integrity, objectivity and impartiality of the governing body.

No member shall directly or indirectly receive any profit from his/her position as such, provided that members may be paid reasonable expenses incurred by them in the performance of their duties and the honorarium, as set by the appropriate authorities. The interests of immediate family members or close personal or business associates of a member are considered to also be the interests of the member.

Members are expected to avoid conflicts or the appearance of conflicts between their duties as a public appointee and their personal or business interest.

An actual or potential conflict of interest arises when a member is placed in a situation in which his or her personal interests, financial or otherwise, or the interests of an immediate family member or of a person with whom there exists, or has recently existed, an intimate relationship, conflict or appear to conflict with the member's responsibilities to the Commission, and the public interest.

Members shall not use information obtained as a result of their appointment for personal or commercial benefit.

A conflict of interest may be "real", "potential" or "perceived"; the same duty to disclose applies to each.

Full disclosure, in itself, does not remove a conflict of interest.

Principles for managing conflicts of interests

In consultation with the member, and in the light of the specific nature of the conflict, the Chair and member may determine the appropriate response to the circumstance, as follows:

- the member must withdraw from any discussion or decision-making process leading to a recommendation on the proposal; or
- the member may remain in the meeting and participate in the discussion but refrain from voting; or,
- the member may remain in the meeting and participate in the discussion and in the voting.

In all cases the Chair will advise the governing body as a whole of the conflict, and of the outcome above, with reasons.

Should the Chair be in a conflict of interest, the Chair will either (a) withdraw from any discussion or decision-making process leading to a recommendation on the proposal, or (b) ask the governing body to decide whether the Chair may remain in the meeting, participate in the discussion while refraining from voting, or remain in the meeting, participate in the discussion and in the voting.

It is the responsibility of other members who are aware of a real, potential or perceived conflict of interest on the part of a fellow member to raise the issue for clarification, first with the member and, if still unresolved, with the Chair.

Rules with regards to programme proposals or specific funding request/issue

When Commission members (or Committee members) are directly associated with the university whose programme proposal or funding request is under consideration, the member must, at a minimum, abstain from the final vote (or final recommendation/advice to Commission in the case of a committee). The abstention is noted in the minutes if requested by the member or Chair. In the event that this member is the Committee Chair, an alternate Chair is assigned for the consideration of the programme proposal in question.